

مکتوبات اشرفیہ

MAKTŪBĀT-E- ASHRAFIYYA

THE LETTERS OF ḤAKIM-UL-UMMAT ḤADṢRAT
MOULĀNĀ ASHRAF ALI SĀHIB THĀNWI

RAḤIMAHULLĀH

AND ḤADṢRAT MOULĀNĀ ISA SĀHIB ILĀHĀ-BĀDI
RAḤIMAHULLĀH

WRITTEN IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS POSED BY:
JANĀB ISMAIL HUSEIN SĀHIB PATEL KĀPODARI

RAḤIMAHULLĀH

THE HONOURABLE FATHER OF ḤADṢRAT MOULĀNĀ
ABDULLĀH SĀHIB KĀPODRAVI *DĀMAT BARAKĀTUHŪ*

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Published by
Al Qamar Publications

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Title : MAKTŪBĀT-E-ASHRAFIYYA

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First Published: June 2018

Pages: 88

Published by:

Al Qamar Publications

1110 Obote Road

Lusaka Zambia

Kitaabs available from the following addresses:

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Contents

Preface	6
Brief Biography of Hakim-ul-Ummah, Hāḍrat Aqdas Moulānā Ashraf Ali Sāhib Thānwi (<i>Raḥimahullāh</i>).....	10
Brief Biography of Hāḍrat Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib Ilāhā-bādi <i>Raḥimahullāh</i>	14
Hāḍrat Thānwi <i>Raḥimahullāh</i> and the district of Gujrat	20
The vicegerents of Hāḍrat Thānwi <i>Raḥimahullāh</i> in Gujrāt.....	25
Famous disciples of Hāḍrat Thānwi from Gujrat.....	31
The efforts of the Ulema of Gujrat in spreading the writings of Hāḍrat Thānwi <i>Raḥimahullāh</i>	36
Biography of Janāb Ismail Husein Sāhib Patel.....	38
An Introduction to the letters.....	41
Letter Number 1	44
Letter Number 2	45

Letter Number 3	46
Letter Number 4	48
Letter Number 5	51
Letter Number 6	53
Letter Number 7	57
Letter Number 8	60
Letter Number 9	62
Letter Number 10	65
Letter Number 11	65
Letter Number 12	67
Letter Number 13	68
Letter Number 14	69
Letter Number 15	70
Letter Number 16	72
Letter Number 17	73
Letter Number 18	75
Letter Number 19	76

Letter Number 20 78

Letter Number 21 79

Letter Number 22 80

Letter Number 23 81

Letter Number 24 82

Letter Number 25 84

Preface

Mufakkir-e-Millat Moulānā Abdullāh Sāhib Kāpodravi
(*Dāmat Barakātuhū*)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

My father, Janāb Ismail Husein Patel Sāhib was only ten or eleven when my grandfather, Husein Patel Sāhib, passed away. My father's uncle, Janāb Ishaq Patel Sāhib, was a police-officer at Jounaghad. He took my father and his brothers under his care, and arranged for their schooling at Jounaghad, where my father studied in Gujrāti until the seventh grade. During that time whoever passed the seventh grade could easily apply for a teaching post. In this manner my father became well versed in secular education but had little chance of acquiring religious education, thus he could not write nor read Urdu. Later, with great effort he learnt how to recite the Noble Qurān and create slight affinity with the Urdu language.

Almighty Allāh opened up his way and a he was invited to take up a post as a teacher in Māngrol. The headmaster of that school had family in Burma who were searching for some good teachers. He requested my father to accompany him to Burma, and my father happily accepted. During that time there was no formalities regarding passports, visas, etc. All one had to do was to purchase a ticket at Calcutta. The headmaster had family in Hathorān. When they heard of his intention they stopped him at Corsamba Station and refused to allow him to proceed further.

My father was very brave and bold. He would frequently tell us that Almighty Allāh had given him a brave temperament, due to which no work ever appeared too difficult to accomplish. Thus, even after finding himself alone, he did not bother searching for a travel companion. Alone he continued to Burma.

There he met some people from Rander, Kolwer and Baleshor, who had pledged allegiance to Hādrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh*. After spending some time with them the desire was created to establish some contact with Hādrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh*. Due to not knowing how to write Urdu he sought the assistance of an Aalim from Peshewar, to whom he would dictate his letters. In this manner a relationship through correspondence was established.

Hādrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh* advised him to keep contact with his vicegerent, Moulānā Isa Sāhib Ilāhā-bādi *Raḥimahullāh*. After returning from Burma my father kept up this relationship, with Munshi Rafiq Sāhib Kaawi now writing his letters. I was quite young at that time but I can still remember Munshi Sāhib coming to the house. The letters that he would write and the replies that would come would be kept in a box, which at that time I was unaware of. After the death of my honourable father, when the box was opened, I found it filled with an extremely valuable treasure of knowledge.

At that time I had no real intention to publish these letters, but later, upon the insistence of friends, I decided to make it available for the benefit of one and all. My friend, Moulānā Ismail ibn Yusuf Kauthar Falāhi

took the responsibility of placing the letters in sequence and has fulfilled this task brilliantly. May Almighty Allāh reward him abundantly. This book in your hands is the collection of those letters. May Almighty Allāh keep the relationship between these pious elders and our children alive and strong. Āmīn.

The result of my father's relationship with Hādrat Thānwi Raḥimahullāh was that he developed an extremely strong connection to his faith. Recitation of the Noble Qurān and loud Zikr became part of his daily routine. He would also pay special attention to our nurturing.

Once, on an extremely cold morning, he awoke me to accompany him for Fajr Salaah. My mother requested that I be allowed to pray at home, due to the severe cold. Hearing this, my father became extremely upset and insisted that I go with him. In short, with regards to my nurturing, my father never showed a lax attitude.

He taught me from an early age how and where to place my shoes, and how each item should be kept in a specific place, so that in the event of a power failure, one shall not be at difficulty to locate what he requires. He also taught us never to visit without informing beforehand, and if ever one does arrive so, one should ensure that he does not stay for a meal. The nurturing which we received from our father was the result of his relationship with Hādrat Thānwi Raḥimahullāh.

It gives us great joy to present this priceless treasure before you. We make dua that Almighty Allāh grant my honourable father complete forgiveness and high

stages of Paradise, and that Almighty Allāh accept the efforts of the compiler of these letters. Āmīn.

(A humble servant) Abdullāh Kāpodravi - May Almighty Allāh forgive him.

Friday, 21 Jumādal Ukhra 1439 / 9 March 2018

Brief Biography of Hakim-ul-Ummah, Hāḍrat Aqdas Moulānā Ashraf Ali Sāhib Thānwi (*Raḥimahullāh*)

Hāḍrat was born in the year 1280 A.H, in the Fārouqi family of Thanābowen. He memorised the Noble Qurān under the tutelage of Hāfiz Husein Ali Sāhib. He completed the primary books of Arabic and Persian in his hometown under Hāḍrat Moulānā Fatah Muhammad Sāhib Thānwi, who was from the first batch of graduates of Dārul Ulūm Deoband.

At the end of 1295 A.H. Hāḍrat enrolled at Dārul Ulūm Deoband and graduated in higher Arabic studies four years later. He later studied Qirāt and Tajwīd in Makkah Mukarramah under Qāri Muhammad Abdullāh Muhājir Makki Sāhib.

From an early age Hāḍrat showed signs of unique intelligence. In 1301 A.H. Hāḍrat was appointed to the highest post of teaching (*Sadar-Mudarris*) at Madrasah Faidh-Aam, Kānpūr, and later at Madrasah Jāmi-ul-Ulūm. Hāḍrat's unique teaching methods at Kānpūr attracted students from far and wide.

In 1315 A.H. Hāḍrat gave up teaching for a salary, and devoted his energy and attention towards the khānqah of Thanābowen, placing full reliance upon Almighty Allāh. Hāḍrat remained at the khānqah until his death,

devoting 47 years of his life in propagating Islam, offering remedies for spiritual maladies, and in writing. The efforts of Hādrat in these three fields, during that era, were matched by none.

Hādrat's deep knowledge in every branch and science of Islam can be gauged from his writings. With regards to practically every branch Hādrat compiled some book. Very few people of Hindustān can perhaps compare with Hādrat when it comes to the aspect of one's writings benefitting far and wide. Hādrat's books and booklets total to about three hundred and fifty. Besides this, over three hundred of Hādrat's lectures have been compiled and printed. Hardly can one find a house in the lands of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in which there is not at least one book of Hādrat's.

From Hādrat's writings, Behishti Zewer has received such acceptance that until today it is being printed and sold yearly in the thousands and has been translated into various languages.

A unique feature of Hādrat is that he did not derive any monetary gain from his books. Whoever desired could print and distribute his books. Hādrat's translation of the Noble Qurān was done in a simple, easy to understand, but at the same time, scholarly manner. In the field of Tafsīr, Hādrat's compilation of Bayānul-Qurān is unique. Similarly, in the field of Ahādith, the compilation, I'lā-us-Sunan, is one of its kind.

Hādrat Thānwi *Rahimahullāh* was the vicegerent of Sheikhul Mashāikh, Hādrat Hāji Imdadullāh Muhājir Makki *Rahimahullāh*. Hādrat's disciples were spread out far and wide. Thousands from the subcontinent of

India and beyond benefitted from Hādrat's remedies for spiritual ailments. His title of Hākim-ul-Ummah gained popularity all over. Through his writings and lectures the masses benefitted greatly, with both their knowledge of Islam and their practice upon its laws increasing after Hādrat's every discourse. In this era, it is indeed hard to find an individual from whom so many have benefitted in the line of Tasawwuf.

One can gauge his mastery in the field of Tasawwuf from the fact that senior Ulemā of the land and abroad were the disciples of Hādrat. During the 47 years that Hādrat devoted to the field of Islāh (rectification and providing remedies for spiritual ailments), there was hardly a field of Islam regarding which Hādrat had not delivered a lecture or compiled a book.

Allāmah Sayyid Suleimān Nadwi *Rahimahullāh* had said regarding Hādrat:

'Hādrat Thānwi's gaze had fallen upon each and every field that required rectification and correction, be it regarding the knowledge of that aspect or with regards to practices prevalent in that field. Hādrat directed his Islāhi efforts towards all sectors of society, the young and the old; the men and the women; the Aalim and the ignorant; the general man and the ascetic; the rich and the poor. He wrote and spoke regarding topics concerning childbirth, marriage, mourning, and numerous other social gatherings, especially with regards to the incorrect customs surrounding it.

Hādrat outlined what was allowed and what was not. He explained the Sunnah and the permitted method

and then indicated towards the innovations and evils that had crept into these functions.

Wherever Hādrat noticed any weakness he made an all out effort to rectify it by highlighting the error in his writings and lectures, be it in the field of politics, social dealings, character, acts of worship or beliefs.

With regards to problems facing the Ummah, which had not been experienced previously, Hādrat outlined the method that the jurists should adopt in order to aid the present and future Muslims who would face such problems. In the field of Tasawwuf, which was indeed Hādrat's speciality and hallmark, Hādrat painted a true picture of what the field of Tasawwuf and Islāh really is. Hādrat sacrificed his day and night in order that the life of Muslims could come back unto the true model of Islam, which they had unfortunately lost and forgotten.

Hādrat Hakim-ul-Ummah's life was one that followed a perfect pattern of operation. Everything would be done on its time and in sequence. Numerous letters of disciples would flow in, and Hādrat would endeavour to write out the answer for each one.

Hādrat's demise occurred on the night of the 16th of Rajab, 1362 A.H. in Thanābowen. Close to the grave of Hāfiz Dhāmin Shahīd is the garden which Hādrat endowed to Khānqah Imdādiyyah. Hādrat is buried in that very garden.¹

¹ (Taken from 'Tārīkh Dārul Ulūm, Deoband, Vol 2, page 51-54, with slight editing)

Brief Biography of Hādrat Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib Ilāhā-bādi *Raḥimahullāh*

(Vicegerent of Hādrat Aqdas Moulānā Ahsraf Ali Sāhib
Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh*)

Hādrat Moulānā Isa's father was Mir Sayyid Khairat Ali Sāhib, who was a Sayyid of the Zaidi lineage. Hādrat was born in Ilāhā-bād. He was white in complexion and slightly tall. He was quite thin but still his appearance would create awe in others. From childhood he had a passion for Salāh and fasting. He learnt and completed his first recitation of the Noble Qurān at home and then after completing the 'Urdu Model' syllabus, he began his English education.

In 1902, while studying for his B.A. doctorate, Hādrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh* visited Ilāhā-bād, and spent a few days at Masjid Sheikh Abdullāh, during which he delivered lectures. From before, Moulānā Isa had a liking for Hādrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh* and his teachings, but this was his first opportunity of seeing and listening directly to Hādrat.

Hādrat's lecture left such an impact upon his heart that in that very sitting he determined to terminate his English studies that very year. Upon returning home he wrote on a few pieces of paper, '*O my nafs (carnal passion and desire), I need to begin preparation for a*

very huge examination, i.e. the examination of the Hereafter. Thus, whatever preparation you need to make for my small B.A. exam, complete that preparation during this year, since I shall not study any more for it after that!

Hādrat then stuck these papers at various points of his room, and on his study-desk, so that the message could sink deep within him. At the end of that year Hādrat requested to write the B.A. exam, but did not pass. He did however pass the C.T. exam, upon which he immediately received a teaching post at the Government High School, where he began teaching English.

Due to his deep yearning for furthering his Islamic education and his concern for the Hereafter, Hādrat Moulānā Isa Sāhib requested a famous Aalim of Fatah-Pur, Moulānā Nur Muhammad Sāhib, (vicegerent of Hādrat Shah Fadlul-Rahmān Sāhib Ghanj-Murādābād), to spare him some time after Asr, during which he could study some books of Arabic, Fiqh and Hadīth.

In this manner Hādrat's Arabic and Islāmic studies began. When Hādrat was later transferred to Lukhnow, he placed himself in the service of Moulānā Abdul-Bāri Sāhib of Farangi-Mahal, under whose tutelage Hādrat completed his studies. In 1926 he accepted the post of Professor of Arabic and Persian studies, a post he retained until retirement in 1937.

Hādrat Moulānā Isa Sāhib had pledged allegiance at the hands of Hādrat Thānwi *Rahimahullāh* in 1902, when Hādrat had visited Ilāhā-bād. He thereafter went to Thanābowen to sit in the company of his sheikh for

forty days, during which he engrossed himself in Zikr and spiritual exercises. In a very short period he progressed through the stages of Suluk (the path of Tasawwuf), and in 1912 he was honoured with permission to initiate others into the path, i.e. he was made a vicegerent (*khalifa*).

Hādrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh* once remarked regarding Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib, '*Moulawi Isa has been blessed with a very high level of zuhd (asceticism)!*' Hādrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh* would direct many of his disciples to take instruction from Hādrat Moulānā Isa Sāhib *Raḥimahullāh*.

Before pledging allegiance Hādrat Moulānā Isa Sāhib would don a *Sherwāni* (a cloak of fine fabric). This changed immediately after pledging allegiance into a simple cloak (*jubba*). Hādrat's high level of spirituality can be gauged from the following incident, narrated by a classmate of Hādrat, Moulānā Muhammad Sādiq Sāhib.

He narrates, '*Whilst we were studying under Hādrat Moulānā Nūr Muhammad Sāhib in Fatha-Pūr, and were listening silently to the lesson, I had the fortune to sit next to Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib. There were times when I could clearly hear his heart making the Zikr of Almighty Allāh.*'

In 1917 Hādrat accompanied Moulānā Abdul Bāri Sāhib on his journey for Hajj. At the age of 45 Hādrat commenced with the memorisation of the Noble Qurān, which he completed in a very short span of time, due to his immense desire for reciting Qurān. Hādrat himself lead the Tarāwih Salāh for many years

thereafter. Hādrat's habit was to recite daily one Manzil (approximately 5 to 6 Juz) of the Noble Qurān after the Fajr Salaah. Hādrat would say, *'If I read any other book, my head starts to pain after a short while. But when I recite Qurān, I find the strength to recite the whole day, with no headache developing, nor any signs of tiredness overtaking me.'*

During one train journey of Hādrat's, his luggage was more than the allowed amount, but due to Hādrat being late and the fear of missing the train, he did not proceed to the desk and pay for the extra weight, nor did any inspector detect that his luggage was overweight. As the train left Hādrat became gripped with uneasiness. He began making dua that Almighty Allāh inspire him with some plan, by which he could clear his matter. The thought came almost instantly that at the next station he should get off, remove his luggage, have it weighed and pay the extra.

At the next station however, due to it being late, the ticket collector refused to weigh his luggage, and told him to let the matter pass. Hādrat rebuked the collector, saying that this was not a matter in which the collector could make decisions, but the collector refused to budge. Finally Hādrat himself placed his luggage on the scale, worked out the extra amount, purchased a train ticket for that amount and then tore the ticket, thereby putting the money for the extra luggage in the account of the Rail Department.

When Hādrat came to live in Ilāhā-bād, his wife purchased a house with her own wealth. Hādrat said to her that since the house was hers, he would only stay

in it if she allowed him to pay a monthly rental, because providing shelter was his responsibility, not hers. Hāḍrat, till the end of his life, continued paying ten rupees per month as rental.

Death

In 1940 Hāḍrat was affected with paralysis. After taking treatment, Hāḍrat found brief relief, but the affect on Hāḍrat's mind remained till the end. Hāḍrat later travelled to Jaunpūr for treatment, staying at the house of his associate, Hāḍrat Doctor Abdul-Hayy Sāhib Lakhnawī *Raḥimahullāh*.

It was there that Hāḍrat suffered his third attack and just eight months after the death of his sheikh, Hāḍrat parted from this temporary abode, on the 25th of Rabi' ul Awwal, 1363 A.H. (1944), at the age of 63.

Hāḍrat was buried next to a small Masjid, close to Masjid Itāla. (To Almighty Allāh do we belong and to Him is our return). Hāḍrat had a unique love and passion for Zikr, thus Almighty Allāh arranged this honour for him that till Qiyāmah the sound of Azān and Tilāwat shall continue falling upon his grave. Hāḍrat also had a unique passion for building and maintaining Masajid, thus Almighty Allāh blessed him with a space of land right next to the Masjid.

Children

Hāḍrat had three sons, Moulānā Hajee Muhammad Ibrahim Sāhib, Moulānā Hafiz Muhammad Yahya Sāhib, and Moulānā Muhammad Luqmaan Sāhib, as well as two daughters.

Writings

Hāḍrat prepared the following unique compilations:

Khulāsatul-Bayān - (Tafsir), Izālatul-Wasin (Hadith),
Bahishti Thamar (Fiqh), Anfās-e-Isa (Tasawwuf), and
Kamālat-e-Ashrafiyah (Tasawwuf)

Vicegerents

The following is a list of some of the known vicegerents
of Hāḍrat:

Moulānā Murtadha Husein Khan Sāhib Raḥimahullāh of
Ganj-Ilāhā-bād

Moulānā Hāfiz Muhammad Yāsīn Sāhib Miryādhi

Moulānā Hāfiz Muhammad Bashir Sāhib

Moulānā Alimullāh Sāhib of Pī-pī-Ganj-Ghorkapūr

Moulānā Muhammad Shafī' Sāhib

Moulānā Sayyid Muhammad Abdur-Rabb Sāhib Sufi²

² (Taken from Kamālat-e-Ashrafiyah pg 3-5, with slight
alteration)

Hādrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh* and the district of Gujrat

Written by: (MI) Ismail ibn Yusuf Kauthar Kosāri Falāhi

Hādrat-e-Aqdas Mujaddid-e-Millat, Hādrat Moulānā Ashraf Ali Sāhib Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh* is that unique personality of the sub-continent, through whom Almighty Allāh showered a great blessing upon the Ummah, for which we shall never be able to express adequate appreciation.

Hādrat was a personality that combined staunch adherence to the Shariah, staunch observation of the Sunnah, a moderate temperament, and an ever watchful gaze over the rights of Almighty Allāh as well as the rights of fellow mankind.

Whosoever drank even once from Hādrat's goblet of love and recognition of Almighty Allāh would find a thousand bitter episodes of life unable to wipe away his intoxication in the love of Almighty Allāh. Hādrat's efforts in Islāh and reformation shall perhaps never be forgotten. His works painted for the present times a picture of Imam Raazi, Imaam Ghazali, Sheikh Juneid and Sheikh Shibli *Rahimahumullāh*.

Hādrat's teachings satiated an entire world, be it the rich or the poor, the leader or the subject, the scholar or the layman, the masses as well as the Ulemā and Mashāikh. In short, all categories of people, directly or indirectly, derived benefit from Hādrat. Many of the great scholars of the sub-continent regarded themselves as the students of Hādrat, and would

gather as such at his gatherings. Where other states benefitted immensely from Hāḍrat, the state of Gujrat too was not left out of this good-fortune. (And to Almighty Allāh we owe all thanks)

Hāḍrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh* had a special relationship with Gujrat. After the fall of Ahmadābād, there was indeed a great decline in the status of Gujrat as a centre of knowledge. During Hāḍrat's era however things were much better, but still Gujrat did not have that bright spark of knowledge which was to be found in other provinces, thus Hāḍrat's vicegerents in this area were few.

Gujrat did however have the honour to host Hāḍrat on three occasions, according to what Hāḍrat Moulānā Ahmed Ashraf Sāhib Rānderi (previous principal of Dārul Ulūm Ashrafiyah and student of Allāmah Anwar Shah Sāhib Kashmiri) has mentioned.

Hāḍrat's first trip was in 1907, accompanied by Hāḍrat Moulānā Khalil Ahmed Sāhib Saharanpuri and Hāḍrat Moulānā Aashiq Ilaahi Sāhib Mirthi *Rahimahumullāh*.

Hāḍrat's second trip was in 1337 A.H. when Hāḍrat travelled to Bombay to see off his honourable wife, who was travelling for Hajj.³ It was on this trip that Hāḍrat visited Jāmiyah Dāhbel, and laid the foundation for the Arabic and Persian (Farsi) classes. In Tārīkh

³ (This is according to what Moulānā Ahmed Ashraf Sāhib has mentioned. However in Ashrafus-Sawānih it is recorded that Hāḍrat came to Bombay to fetch his wife, upon her return from Hajj.)

Jāmiyah Dāhbel this incident has been recorded under the date 1337 A.H.

Hādrat's third trip was is 1342 A.H. upon the invitation of the Kolwer locality. This is what Moulānā Ahmed Ashraf has narrated. During this trip Hādrat visited Kathor, Rānder and Dāhbel. Elders have mentioned that Hādrat Mufti Kifāyatullah Sāhib of Delhi accompanied Hādrat during this trip.

It has been written in Tuhfah Anjuman Islamia (pg 30) that Hādrat, accompanied by the seniors of Rānder, travelled by ox and cart to visit his Pir-bhai (co-disciple), Janāb Hafiz Ismail Sāhib Patel Kholweri. Janāb Hafiz Ismail was blind and was known for his high level of spirituality and his passion for Zikr. As the conveyance came close to the village of Kolwer, witnessing the huge amount of dust (دھول - *dhoul* in Urdu) lifting from the unpaved roads, Hādrat jokingly commented that this village is not Kolwer, but rather Dhoulwer (a dusty village).

Hādrat stayed in the village of Kolwer for ten days, at the building of the old school. Daily after Asr Salāh Hādrat Thānwi and Janāb Hafiz Ismail Sāhib *Raḥimahumullāh* would conduct a majlis either at the Masjid adjacent to the school, or at the home of Hafiz Sāhib.

The author of Tuhfah Anjuman Islāmīa, Hādrat Moulānā Sayyid Zul-Fiqār Sāhib Narwari Raḥimahullāh has written that it does not appear that any other village of Gujrāt had the honour of hosting Hādrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh* for a full ten days. This honour

was reserved for Kolwer. (فکفی بها شرفا و فخرا - *This alone is sufficient for its honour*).

During this trip the people of Khosāri, which is my village, came to invite Hādrat to visit their village, but Hādrat unfortunately excused himself, and sent Hādrat Mufti Kifāyatullah Sāhib in his place. Thus, until today the village of Kosāri is famous as *Mufti Mahalla* (the village of Mufti Sāhib).

It has been mentioned that on the return journey Hādrat Mufti Sāhib made mention of the religious and academic environment of Kosāri, hearing which Hādrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh* expressed remorse that he had not visited it.

Elders have also mentioned that for Jumuah Hādrat Thānwi went from Kolwer to Khathor. Mention of the trip to Khathor can also be found in the letters of correspondence between Janāb Ibrahim Mutawwali Sāhib (previous chair-person of Jāmi Masjid Korsāri), who had pledged allegiance to Hādrat during his trip to Kolwer. During this trip many people of the village and surrounding areas benefitted from Hādrat.

During this trip Hādrat also met a few times with Hādrat Sufi Suleiman Sāhib Lachpori. (Mention of these meetings can be found in *Ashrafus-Sawānih*). Sufi Sāhib was a saint of the area, and was perhaps 100 years old at that time. He met Hādrat with great affection, and even accompanied Hādrat for many miles on one occasion.

It has been mentioned regarding one of their meetings that occurred when Hādrat was travelling from Rander

to Surat, whilst Sufi Sāhib was coming from Surat to Rander. At a bridge Sufi Sāhib got out of his car and came forward to meet Hādrat, who was not aware of his approaching and was still sitting in his car. After the meeting, when Sufi Sāhib reached Rander he proceeded to the Masjid and sat crying for a long period of time. Someone enquired the reason, to which he replied, *'I cannot explain the enjoyment of what my eyes have today experienced!'* When Hādrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh* was told of this, he remarked, *'It is only on account of his humility and love for me that he has said such a thing, otherwise I am indeed one of his adorers.'*

Hādrat also met Hāfiz Sālih Sāhib Rānderi, and in a later majlis commented that Hāfiz Sālih is indeed *Sālih* (pious).'

Hādrat visited Dāhbel on this trip as well, from which we understand that Hādrat honoured Dāhbel with his presence twice. Once in 1337 A.H, where he laid the foundation and the second in 1342 A.H. before the arrival of Hādrat Shah Anwar Sāhib Kashmiri *Raḥimahullāh*.

Hādrat Thānwi arrived at the Madrasah on the 22nd of Jumadal Ukhra, and left on the 24th. This was during the time when Hādrat Moulānā Ahmed Buzurg Sāhib was principal. During this visit Hādrat tested the students studying tajwīd, and praised the level of education.

Upon the request of the disciples of Rānder, Hādrat travelled to Rangoon, Through this, Hādrat's blessings spread throughout Burma and surrounding areas, and

many were given permission (*ijazah*) to accept the allegiance of others, and to nature them.

The vicegerents of Hādrat Thānwi ***Raḥimahullāh* in Gujrāt**

In the district of Gujrāt there were many that had established relationship with Hādrat, but only three were given *ijazah*, from which one was permitted to accept the allegiance of others (مجاز بیعت), and two were permitted to hold majālis (deliver spiritual discourses) and nature others, without accepting allegiance (مجاز صحبت). The amazing thing is that all three were from the same family which is a feature that is perhaps not to be found in any other family.

Janāb Haji Muhammad Yusuf Sāhib Randeri **Ranghooni**

Janāb Hāji Muhammad was the paternal uncle of Hāji Dāwood Hāshim Sāhib Rānderi and the brother of Mufti Mahmood Dāwood Sāhib's grandfather. He held the Ulemā in great respect, and had great passion and zeal for his faith. He was a sincere and most generous attendant of Hādrat Hakim-ul-Ummah, as well as an ardent devotee. He structured his life fully in

accordance to the teachings of Hāḍrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh*. He was extremely particular with regards to the rights of fellow men and was an example of the predecessors when it came to Zikr and worship.

In his bequest he left a huge sum of wealth for Hāḍrat, which Hāḍrat did not touch until a verdict was issued by the jurists of that area regarding the validity of the bequest.

He passed away on the 8th of Muharram 1352 A.H. (3rd May 1934) May Almighty Allāh shower upon him His Mercy. Āmīn.⁴

Haji Dawood Hashim Sāhib Randeri Burmi

He was born in Rangoon in the year 1882. His father, Janāb Hāshim Yusuf Sāhib had pledged allegiance to Hāḍrat Miyāh Sayyid Ashghar Husein Sāhib Deobandi. For the purpose of business he left his village of Rānder and travelled to Burma. His uncle, whose biography has just been mentioned, was the vicegerent of Hāḍrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh*. His basic education began in Rānder, where he studied Urdu, Gujrāti and English. He then studied further at Anjuman Himāyatul Islām and Madrasah Amīniyāh in Delhi. On account of the environment not suiting him he quit his studies and engaged himself in trade.

⁴ (Adapted from : Karwān-e-Thānwi pg. 130)

Hāji Sāhib made tremendous efforts in refuting false ideologies. He regularly invited Ulemā over to Burma thereby benefitting the masses through their lectures. He stood as chairperson over scores of religious institutes in Burma and was always at the forefront in providing services to the public. His wealth and position did not however prevent him from pledging allegiance at the hands of Hāḍrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh*. His uncle had instructed him to initiate a relationship with Hāḍrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh* by corresponding through letters.

He was extremely particular with regards to completing his prescribed daily practices (*ma'mulāt*). Hāḍrat's writing and composed lectures were always to be found at his side. He afforded special attention to the studying of Tafsir Bayānul-Qurān.

Upon hearing that Hāḍrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh* was not well, he made great efforts in gathering prescribed medication and sending it all the way from Burma. His love for Hāḍrat Thānwi was beyond comprehension and had reached the level of '*ishq*' (extreme love) and Hāḍrat Thānwi too had great love for him.

Once, when he came to distribute aid to the victims of the Bihār earthquake, he took out time to visit Hāḍrat in Thanābowen. When the news reached Hāḍrat Thānwi that Hāji Sāhib is coming, Hāḍrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh* stood up almost immediately and left the khānqah to receive him. This was something that Hāḍrat Thānwi would not normally do.

After an exchange of greetings Hāḍrat brought him into the khānqah and made him sit next to him on his

cushion. Such honour would never be shown to even Hādrat's senior vicegerents. Forget giving them a place on his cushion, Hādrat would not even stand up to receive them.⁵

Whilst engaged with social and welfare works he began suffering from high blood pressure, but his intense desire to be of service to others did not allow him the opportunity to attend to his own ailment. This illness eventually proved fatal and on the 20th of March 1940, at the age of 57, Hāji Sāhib departed from this world, leaving behind pious children and his Madrasah, Darul-Uloom Tānbwe, as a means of perpetual reward, In-shā Allāh.

Upon receiving the news of his demise, Hādrat Thānwi expressed his grief in the following words:

'Yesterday, on the day of Thursday, a letter, followed by a telegram, informing of the sad news, was received. The news caused great pain to the heart. My family as well as those at the Madrasah felt great grief at the news. Thinking of all marhoom's unique qualities brought tears to the eyes, but besides exercising patience what else can one really do? All made dua for Marhoom's forgiveness. Those presently in the khāngah recited from the Noble Qurān and passed the reward on to Marhoom. May Almighty Allāh elevate his stages.

The news saddened all, especially the family of the second house (i.e. Hādrat's younger wife), who could

⁵ (Extracted from Raushan-Sitāre pg 106)

not control her tears. She too recited a great amount of the Noble Qurān and passed the reward on to Marhoom.'

Hādrat Hāji Sāhib had received permission from Hādrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh* to conduct spiritual majālis (sittings)⁶ and to prescribe remedies for spiritual maladies.

Haji Mufti Mahmood Dāwood Hāshim Sāhib Rānderi

Hādrat's hometown was Rānder. His father, Hāshim Sāhib was the vicegerent of Hādrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh*. He completed his primary Islamic books at the hands of Hādrat Moulānā Abdul Latif Sāhib, and thereafter, in the year 1347 A.H. enrolled at Madrasah Mazāhirul-ULūm Saharanpūr, taking admission into the second year of Farsi. In 1355 A.H. he completed his final year of Hadith under the illustrious scholars of his time, Hādrat Moulānā Muhammad Zakariya Sāhib Khandehlewi, Hādrat Moulānā Abdur-Rahmān Sāhib Kāmilpūri, Hādrat Moulānā As'adullāh Sāhib Rāmpūri and Hādrat Moulānā Manzoor Ahmed Sāhib. He also had the fortune to study under Moulānā Abdul Mājīd Sāhib, Moulānā Akbar Ali Sāhib and Moulānā Amir Ahmed Sāhib (May Almighty Allāh elevate their stages).

⁶ (Extracted from Raushan-Sitāre pg 125)

After graduating, Hādrat involved himself in teaching and guiding others (Islāh and Tabligh). He also took over the administrative responsibilities of Darul Ulūm Tanbwe, as well as that of Jamiat-e-Ulemā-e-Islām and Markazi Dārul-Ifta Burma. From his writings 'Ad'iya-e-Masnoonah' and Ta'limul-Hājj' are well known.

He too had established a spiritual relationship with Hādrat Thānwi, and had received permission from Hādrat to conduct spiritual sittings (Islāhi Majālis). After the demise of Hādrat Thānwi *Rahimahullāh*, he established a relationship with Hādrat Moulānā Zafar Ahmed Sāhib Uthmāni, who granted him permission to initiate others into the chain. Hādrat Sheikhul-Hadith Moulānā Muhammad Zakariyah Sāhib had also granted him such permission.

Hādrat Mufti Sāhib, in accordance to the teachings of Hakimul-Ummah Moulānā Ashraf Ali Sāhib Thānwi *Rahimahullāh*, had during his lifetime accomplished great works of Tabligh and Islāh in the district of Rander.⁷

Beside these three great personalities, Hādrat Allamah Muhammad Yusuf Sāhib Binnori, who was a graduate of Dāhbel and the prized student of Hādrat Allamah Anwar Shah Sāhib Kashmiri, may also be included in the list of Hādrat Thānwi's vicegerents of Gujrāt, since Hādrat Binnori had devoted much of his life and efforts in the Gujrāt area.

⁷ (Extracted from Karwān-e-Thānwi pg 200)

In a similar manner Hāḍrat Moulānā Hakim Muhammad Saeed Sāhib Ġhangohi, resident of Bombay, famously known as Hakim Ajmeri, mayan be included in this list, since before 1960 Bombay was part of Gujrāt, and the entire area was called District of Bombay.

After making brief mention of Hāḍrat's vicegerents of Gujrāt, a list of some of the well known disciples of Hāḍrat from Gujrāt shall now be listed.

Famous disciples of Hāḍrat Thānwi from Gujrat

1) Hāḍrat Moulānā Ahmed Buzurg Sāhib Simliki

Previous principal of Jāmiah Islāmīa Tā'limud-Deen, Dāhbel, and vicegerent of Sheikhu-l-Islām Hāḍrat Madanī *Raḥimahullāh*, Hāḍrat Moulānā Ahmed Sāhib was also blessed to have enjoyed a very close relationship with Hāḍrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh*. Hāḍrat had established his relationship with Harat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh* most probably after the demise of Hāḍrat Ganghohi *Raḥimahullāh*.

Mention of Hāḍrat's relationship with Hāḍrat Thānwi, as well as some of Hāḍrat's letters of correspondence have been recorded in Nuqush-e-Buzurgan, vol 2 pg 226, in which mention has also been made of Hāḍrat Moulānā Ahmed Sāhib's high spiritual level.

2) Grand Mufti of Gujrāt Mufti Sayyid Abdur-Rahīm Sāhib Lachpūri

It has been mentioned in Hayāt-e-Abdur Rahīm, vol 1 pag 90, that when Haji Gulāb Khān Sāhib, chairman of the *Bari* Masjid of Rānder intended to visit Thanābowen in 1350 A.H. Hādrat Mufti Sāhib requested that he take with him a letter in which Mufti Sāhib requested Hādrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh* to accept his allegiance. The reply that Hādrat Thānwi gave was indeed unique. He wrote:

'Moulānā (May Almighty Allāh spread your blessings)

Being of service to you shall be of no problem. As for taking service from you, that I cannot do. Spiritual benefit however is not based upon the latter, but instead upon following the laws of the Shariah and taking counsel. With regards to the laws of the Shariah, that you are much more knowledgeable than me. As for offering advice and counsel (mashwera), this servant is ready to be of service whenever you so desire. Request for your duas and I too shall make dua for you.....Ashraf Ali.'

Hādrat Mufti Abdur-Rahim Sāhib once even visited Hādrat Thānwi at Thanābowen, when he journeyed to Delhi for the historical meeting of Congress.

An incident worthy of mention is that when Hāji Gulāb Khān Sāhib presented the first letter of Mufti Sāhib to Hādrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh*, he at the same time

made mention of some incidents from the life of Hādrat Mufti Sāhib, amongst which was that during the month of Ramadhaan, when Hādrat Mufti Sāhib would sit for I'tikaaf and no one could be found to perform the Janāzah Salāh, Hādrat would stand right at the back of the Masjid and ask that the rows be straightened. When all was ready, Hādrat would step out of the Masjid, perform the Salāh, and immediately thereafter re-enter the Masjid. Upon hearing this, Hādrat Thānwi *Rahimahullāh* commented, '*Hādrat Mufti Sāhib has indeed done the correct thing!*'

3) Hādrat Moulānā Muhammad Ibrahim Sāhib Palanpuri

Whilst still a student at Sahāranpūr. Hādrat Moulānā Ibrahim Sāhib, through the medium of his teacher, Hādrat Moulānā Abdur-Rahmān Sāhib Kāmilpūri, sent a letter to Hādrat Thānwi *Rahimahullāh*, requesting permission to pledge allegiance. Hādrat Thānwi's general rule was that whilst studying a student should not pledge allegiance, but for Moulānā Ibrahim Sāhib an exception was made, on account of the intense desire that he displayed.

Hādrat however, on account of ill health, instructed that Moulānā Muhammad Ibrahim Sāhib consult and take guidance from anyone of Hādrat's vicegerents. Hādrat Moulānā Muhammad chose Hādrat Moulānā Abdur Rahmān Sāhib Kāmilpūri for this purpose.

Hādrat Moulānā later received permission from Hādrat Sheikhul-Hadith Moulānā Muhammad Zakariya Sāhib Kandhelewi to initiate others into the chain.

He passed away on the 12th of Safar 1423 A.H (May Almighty Allāh shower him with His Mercies)

4) Hādrat Moulānā Muhammad Hasan Sāhib Dho-hadi

Hādrat was a well known teacher at Madrasah Amīniyyah in Delhi and later at Jāmiyah Islāmīa at Dāhbel. He too had established a relationship with Hādrat Thānwi *Rahimahullāh* during his student days. It is mentioned that when he arrived at the gathering of Hādrat Thānwi, he found those sitting closest were Hādrat's disciples. He sat at the back, feeling regret that if he too had been a disciple he could have also been at the front. It seems that Hādrat Thānwi *Rahimahullāh* received kashf (a strong thought that Almighty Allāh places within the heart) regarding this feeling, for a few minutes later Hādrat lifted his gaze towards the young student and ordered that he be allowed to come to the front of the gathering.⁸

⁸ (Extracted from Sawānih Hādrat Moulānā Muhammad Hasan Sāhib Dho-hadi Sāhib pg 160)

A few other note-worthy disciples

- Hāḍrat Moulānā Muhammad Miyāh Sāhib, son of Mūsa Miyāh Sāhib and prized student of Allāmah Anwar Shah Sāhib Kashmiri *Raḥimahullāh*
- Moulānā Marghūb Ahmed Sāhib Lachpūri
- Hāḍrat Moulānā Ali Muhammad Sāhib Tarājwi
- Hakīm Fakhrud-Din Sāhib Surti
- Hāḍrat Moulānā Ghūlām Muhammad Sāhib Nūrgat Tarkhesweri
- Moulānā Adam Sāhib Ghodrawi
- Moulānā Abdul-Haq Sāhib Ghodrawi
- Hāji Suleimān Mulla Afriqi
- Moulānā Ismail Mahmoodji Umarji
- Moulānā Ahmed Muhammad Vahed Sāhib Afriqi
- Munshi Mahmood Qasim Sāhib Pandor Kāpodrawi
- Janāb Qasim Patel Sāhib Kāpodrawi

Moulānā Mūsa Sāhib Rāndera (previous chief teacher of Madrasah Madina Kothāri)

The efforts of the Ulema of Gujrat in spreading the writings of Hādrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh*

In publishing, translating and spreading the writings of Hādrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh* the people of Gujrāt played a great role. Hādrat's writings were translated into Gujrāti, Burmese and English and published and distributed in the thousands. In Ashrafus-Sawānih vol 3 pg 486 a full list of the people that aided in this mission has been recorded. From that list the names of the people of Gujrāt that have been recorded are as follows:

1) Haji Muhammad Yusuf Sāhib Ranghoni arranged for the simplification and translation of Tahqiq-e-Tā'lim into English. He also had Hayātul-Muslimin translated into English. Then he had Tamhīd-Tā'limuddin and Behishti Zewar translated into Burmese and Tā'lim-u-Tālib translated into Gujrāti.

2) Haji Dawood Hāshim Sāhib arranged for the translation of the booklet Bast-ul-Banān and one section of Hifz-ul-Imān into English.

3) Hāshim ibn Yusuf Barocha Sāhib Rānderi himself translated Qasd-u-Sabīl into Gujrāti. He also translated Tashīl-ul-Mawā'iz into Gujrāti and published it in his Gujrāti journal.

4) Hāḍrat Gulām Muhammad Sādiq Sāhib Rānderi translated Behishti Ghohar and Behishti Zewar into Gujrāti

5) Hāḍrat Munshi Mahmood Qāsim Sāhib Pandor Kapodrawi translated Hayāt-ul-Muslimin , which was then published by Janāb Qasim Sāhib Surti. He also translated the booklet Khatima-bil-Khair and one portion of Science and Islam into Gujrāti. For a long period of time Munshi Sāhib continued translating Hāḍrat's discourses into Gujrāti for the magazine 'Al-Tabligh', which would be published in Tardkeshwer.

6) Janāb Munshi Isa Sāhib Kāwi, editor of the magazine, 'Peghām', translated Aghlāt-ul-Awām and Islāh-u-Rusūm and had it published by Majlis Khuddām-u-Din, of Tardkeshwer. He also translated Tā'lim-u-Din.

7) Munshi Ismail Muhammad Rafiq Sāhib Tankarwi translated Islah-u-Rusūm and Tā'lim-u-Din into Gujrāti and had it published by Majlis Khuddām-u-Din, of Tardkeshwer.

8) Moulānā Abdur-Rahman Sāhib, the son of Moulānā Ghulam Muhammad Sādiq Sāhib Rānderi translated five of Hāḍrat's discourses into Gujrāti.

This in brief is a glimpse at the winds of effort that spread the teachings of Hāḍrat from Thanābowen to the corners of the world, a wind which can still be felt today, and which in fact is on the increase. We make Dua that Almighty Allāh continues benefitting all through the blessings and teachings of Hāḍrat. Āmīn.

We shall now make a brief mention of Janāb Ismail Husein Sāhib Patel, whose letters have been gathered in this booklet.

Biography of Janāb Ismail Husein Sāhib Patel

Janāb's hometown was Jītālī, in the district of Baruch. His grandfather, Janāb Qasimji and his father, Janāb Husein Sāhib were the elders of the community, and men that commanded great respect. Speaking English in their home had become the norm. Hādrat lost his father at an early age, thus he was sent to the home of his uncle, Janāb Ishaqji Patel Sāhib, who was an inspector of the army at Jaunāghar.

Janāb studied until the seventh grade at Jaunāghar and then returned home, where he found employment at a nearby village as a teacher. While there, he was asked by a fellow teacher to accompany him to Burma, since his family there were in search of some good teachers. Janāb got ready and the two of them quietly departed. During the journey the family of the other teacher got wind of their intention and managed to stop him at a nearby station.

Janāb plucked up the courage and made the journey to Burma all alone. From Calcutta Hādrat took a steam ship to Burma, and then took up residence at the

village of Heyu. It was during this time, in 1933, that Hāḍrat Mufakkir-e-Islām Moulānā Abdullāh Kāpodravi Sāhib was born.

In 1935 Janāb Ismail Sāhib returned from Burma and took up employment in Kāpodra, and later began a business in Anghleswer, but unfortunately it was not successful and had to close down. Janāb also worked for some time at the village, Dhorāji.

In Kāpodra there was a huge following of Hāḍrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh*, most senior amongst whom was Hāḍrat Munshi Mahmood Qasim Sāhib Pandor, who was a vicegerent of Hāḍrat Moulānā Musa Sāhib Madani, who in turn was the vicegerent of Hāḍrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh*. People would gather at the courtyard of his home to listen to his explanation of the Mathnawi Sharif and the discourses of Hāḍrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh*.

Janāb would also participate in these gatherings and soon the desire to pledge allegiance to Hāḍrat Thānwi was created. Janāb wrote a letter to Hāḍrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh* requesting such, and received instruction to first create a relationship with Moulānā Isa Sāhib Ilāhā-bādi, and upon Moulana Isa intercession his request would be fulfilled. After much difficulty and effort, Janāb's allegiance was finally accepted. The disposition and nature of Hāḍrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh* very soon rubbed onto Janāb, which one who reads his letters will easily realise.

Janāb had within him a great passion for the Zikr of Almighty Allāh, and was extremely punctual on his Salāh and recitation of the Noble Qurān. He would

always be found in the remembrance of death and pondering over the magnificence of Almighty Allāh.

Studying the writings of Hādrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh* was his hobby, amongst which were books like Behishti Ghohar, Qasd-u-Sabīl, Islāh-u-Rusūm, Islāh-e-Muāsharat and Hādrat's discourses. So great was his devotion to the study of the books of his sheikh that he even completed a reading of Tafsīr Bayān-ul-Qurān.

Being unable to write Urdu, he would travel to nearby villages to find someone to write out his letters to Hādrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh*. One would always find him requesting dua for his death to be with Īmān, and for him to be blessed with a proper understanding of Islam.

He would be staunch upon commanding what was right and prohibiting from wrong, in accordance to Hādrat Thānwi's teachings. He spent about twenty five days at the Khānqah in Thanābowen, after which he travelled to Deoband to meet with Hādrat Hakīm-ul-Islām Qāri Muhammad Tayyib Sāhib and other elders. Close to the end of his life he began falling ill quite regularly, and finally at the age of just over eighty he departed from this world and is now sleeping peacefully at the graveyard of Khapodra. (May Almighty Allāh shower upon him His favours.)

Janāb left behind him, as a means of continuous reward, a unique and distinguished scholar of Islam, Hādrat Mufakkir-e-Millat Moulānā Abdullāh Sāhib Kāpodravi, whose name and knowledge is known to both the East and the West.

(May Almighty Allāh grant him long life, and shower upon him His favours. Amīn.)

An Introduction to the letters

The letters which are to follow are a collection of the correspondence between Janāb Ismail Husein Sāhib Patel and Hāḍrat Hakim-ul-Ummah Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh* as well as Hāḍrat Moulānā Isa Sāhib Ilāhā-bādi, from whom Hāḍrat Thānwi instructed him to learn from.

From these letters much can be learnt, amongst which are:

- how a disciple show revere and have complete trust in his mentor
- the methodology of the spiritual doctor of the era in prescribing simple remedies for spiritual maladies

From these letters one gets introduced to the path adopted by Hakim-ul-Ummah, through which thousands found cure from the illnesses of the spiritual heart, and in a very short span of time were progressing rapidly upon the path.

By Hāḍrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh* there was never any real effort to widen the scope of disciples. Rather emphasis was placed upon quality. For this reason Hāḍrat would never accept allegiance as long as an intense desire was not shown. Hāḍrat would first instruct the one desirous of pledging allegiance to

understand the meaning of 'the rights of Almighty Allāh' and 'the rights of fellow man'. He would then be told to read thoroughly through each lesson of Behishti Zewar and Behishti Ghohar, whereby one could get a grasp over the basic laws of Islam.

Tajwīd would then be rectified and the books Ādābul-Muāsharah, Islāh-u-Rusūm and Qasd-u-Sabīl would be prescribed through which one would understand how to live with others, one would find within himself a hatred being created against customs and innovations, and one would understand the true essence of Tasawwuf, and what is required from the disciple.

Upon completion of all of this, Hāḍrat would accept the allegiance of the disciple, after which the disciple would progress rapidly along the path, since much of the work had already been completed. It was on account of this that it became famous that the disciples of Hāḍrat Thānwi *Rahimahullāh* are on par with the vicegerents of other Mashaikh.

Even today, despite the challenges being much more and the condition of man being at its lowest, then too if one wished to adopt the method of Hāḍrat Thānwi, he would indeed find success, but it would require that he himself possess the qualities of true concern for the Ummah, abstinence from the pleasures of this world, and staunch observance of the Shariah and the Sunnah, qualities which were found within Hāḍrat Thānwi to the maximum.

At the end it would indeed be appropriate to mention that Janāb Ismail Husein Sāhib, being unable to himself write in Urdu, would travel to nearby villages and dictate his letters to one who could write. During his time in Gujrāt there was no real environment of Urdu, thus even the one who would write would be found weak in the language. For this it was found necessary to make some changes to the original letters of Janāb Ismail Sāhib to make it sound grammatically correct.

Yes, in the letters of Hāḍrat Thānwi *Raḥimahullāh* as well as that of Hāḍrat Moulānā Isa Sāhib *Raḥimahullāh* no alterations have been made.

These letters, after having been hidden for a quarter of a century, have now by the Grace of Almighty Allāh, been produced for all to benefit, for which we express our sincere appreciation to Mufakkir-e-Millat Hāḍrat Moulānā Abdullāh Kāpodravi Sāhib, who firstly ensured its preservation and then turned his attention towards its being composed and published.

We make dua that Almighty Allāh keep Hāḍrat's shadow over us for a long time, bless Hāḍrat with good health and spread Hāḍrat's teachings and blessings far and wide. Āmīn.

Letter Number 1

(To Hadrat Thānwi *Rahimahullāh*)

From a humble slave Ismail ibn Husein Patel

In the service of my respected and honourable mentor,
Janāb Moulānā Ashraf Ali Sāhib (May your shadow
remain for a long time over us)

(May peace be upon you as well as those close to you)

This lowly one has been greatly impressed by your writings, such as Behishti Zewar, Behishti Ghohar and other books. I now wish to request that you accept my pledge of allegiance to you. I promise In-sha Allāh to practice upon what you instruct me with. A few other books of Hādrat's have also come in front of me, such as An-Nur, Al-Hādi, and some of Hādrat's discourses that have been transcribed. These books too have increased my desire to be from the disciples of Hādrat. I thus await your instruction.

3rd Rajab 1347

This lowly one's address is:

Ismail ibn Husein Patel
Paarcha Farosh Ankleswer
Jhāpa Bazār
Bharūch

Letter Number 2

(To Hadrat Thānwi *Rahimahullāh*)

In the service of Janāb Hādrat Qāri Haji Moulānā Ashraf Ali Sāhib (May Almighty Allāh lengthen your shadow over us)

As Salaamu Alaikum

Your honourable letter has reached me. I have read it and understood its contents. I have read the conditions for pledging allegiance. By the grace of Almighty Allāh I am observant of conditions 1, 2 and 3, and I pledge to remain observant upon it. I have read the books stipulated in the conditions. (1)⁹

I do read your discourses.

I am ready to fulfil the fourth condition. (2)

As Hādrat shall advise I am ready to obey.

Was Salaam.

Your servant Ismail ibn Husein Patel
Pārcha Farosh Ankleswer
Jhāpa Bazār

⁹ It was the habit of Hādrat Thānwi *Rahimahullāh* to write the numbers, 1, 2, etc in brackets after a point that he wished to address or answer. The answer would then come at the end of the letter, in accordance to the numbers listed above. (Translator)

Bharūch
9th Rajab 1346¹⁰

Answer

- 1) Ponder deeply over the conditions stated over it. Then write regarding each condition individually whether you can observe it or not.
- 2) This statement is not sufficient! You must write what the condition is and then write your answer regarding it. And to write upon my letter is against the demands of etiquette!

Letter Number 3

(To Hadrat Thānwi *Rahimahullāh*)

In the service of Janāb Hādrat Qāri Hāji Moulānā Ashraf Ali Sāhib (May Almighty Allāh lengthen your shadow over us)

As Salāmu Alaikum

Your honourable letter has reached me. According to your instructions I write the following:

Condition No.1: Whatever amount of the Noble Qurān which you have memorised or at least can read, you

¹⁰ The first letter was dated 3rd Rajab, for which an answer from Hādrat Thānwi *Rahimahullah* must have been received. This letter was then sent 6 days later, on the 9th of Rajab. From this one can gauge how efficient and fast the postal system was during those days.

must correct its pronunciation, i.e. learn and apply the laws of Tajwīd.

Reply: I have memorised the Noble Qurān, and I recite it daily. I promise to rectify my pronunciation by one who reads correctly.

Condition No.2: Study all or at least the seven parts of Behishti Zewar, together with Behishti Ghohar, Islāh-u-Rusūm, and the forward of Qasd-u-Sabīl, and practice accordingly.

Reply: I have read these books and act accordingly and promise to continue doing so In sha Allāh.

Condition No.3: You must read or listen to the discourses of mine that are published.

Reply: I do read it, and promise to continue doing so and practicing accordingly.

Condition No.4: Your initial education in this field shall be at the hands of one of my vicegerents, who I chose or who you propose and I agree. As long as at least 25 letters of correspondence does not occur between you and him do not ask me to instruct you directly.

Reply: As Hādrat instructs. I accept it with no objections.(1)

Your servant Ismail ibn Husein Patel
Pārcha Farosh Ankleswer
Jhāpa Bazaar
Bharūch
14th Rajab 1346

Answer

- 1) This is not a correct answer. The question was whether you have any name to propose from my vicegerents or should I choose for you. All that you have mentioned in your letter is that you will accept whatever is ordered. You have not proposed any name, nor asked that I choose for you!

Letter Number 4

(To Hadrat Thānwi *Rahimahullāh*)

In the service of Janāb Hādrat Qāri Hāji Moulānā Ashraf Ali Sāhib (May Almighty Allāh lengthen your shadow over us)

As Salaamu Alaikum

Your honourable letter has reached me. According to instructions I write the following:¹¹

Condition No.1: Whatever amount of the Noble Qurān which you have memorised or at least can read, you

¹¹ This letter is an exact copy of the previous one, except for the correction made regarding condition No. 4. Janāb first had this letter written out exactly as the one that had preceded it, and had made the correction, in accordance to what Hādrat Thānwi demanded. (Translator)

must correct its pronunciation, i.e. learn and apply the laws of tajweed.

Reply: I have memorised the Noble Qurān, and I recite it daily. I promise to rectify my pronunciation by one who reads correctly.

Condition No.2: Study all or at least the seven parts of Behishti Zewar, together with Behishti Ghohar, Islaah-u-Rusoom, and Qasd-u-Sabil, and practice accordingly.

Reply: I have read these books and act accordingly and promise to continue doing so In sha Allāh.

Condition No.3: You must read or listen to the discourses of mine that are published.

Reply: I do read it, and promise to continue doing so and practicing accordingly.

Condition No.4: Your initial education in this field shall be at the hands of one of my vicegerents, who I chose or who you propose and I agree. As long as at least 25 letters of correspondence does not occur between you and him do not ask me to instruct you directly.

Reply: Please select an instructor for me. I promise to study under him In-sha Allāh. (1)

Your servant Ismail ibn Husein Patel
Kāpodra Ukhleswer
Bharūch
Bombay
10th Sha'baan 1346

Answer

Send this letter to the address given below. He shall begin your lessons. Thereafter you must send to me the answers you reply to his instructions as well as this letter. I will then accept your allegiance.

The address is:

Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib
Principal Intermediate School
Ilāhā-bād

Answer (from Moulānā Isa Sāhib)¹²

There is no request from your side for anything, thus no answer has been given. You should yourself make a request, then I shall, In-sha Allāh, not decline in being of service.

Was-Salām
Muhammad Isa

¹² In response to the letter Janāb Ismail then sent to Hadrat Moulāna Isā Sāhib *Rahimahullāh*, the following reply was received

Letter Number 5

(To Haḍrat Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib
Rahimahullāh)

To my most honourable master, Janāb Hāḍrat Moulānā
Muhammad Isa Sāhib
Principal of the English School of Ilāhā-bād
(May Almighty Allāh lengthen your shadow over us)

As Salaamu Alaikum (1)

By the favour of Almighty Allāh this lowly one is well
and prays that Janāb, as well as his family and friends
are also well.

I wish to inform Janāb of the details of my spiritual
condition, and request that Janāb instruct me further.

My present condition is as follows:

I daily perform my five times Salāh in congregation and
I read the discourses of Hāḍrat Moulānā Ashraf Ali
Saheb that reach my hand, like Al-Hādi, Al-Tablīgh, etc.
I also study the books written by Hāḍrat Thānwi and I
practice accordingly. May Almighty Allāh keep me
steadfast.

I am punctual with the Azkaar that has been
recommended in Hāḍrat's books, which I complete
after every Salaah. The condition of my heart has
improved greatly. It no longer strays towards evil
thoughts as frequently as it would do previously. And
when it does stray, then very quickly, by the Grace of
Almighty Allāh, it returns towards the straight path.

At times the desire arises to perform plenty of Nafl (non-obligatory prayers), but then laziness overtakes me and I end up doing hardly anything. I request some guidance from Janāb on how to remedy this weakness.
(2)

The reason why it took me so long to send this reply was due to the fact that I myself am unable to write Urdu. I thus have to travel to nearby villages and beg for someone to aid me and write out as I dictate. The writer too, many a time, is not well-versed with the Urdu language, thus I beg forgiveness if any word is found of disrespect.

I ask for your dua that Almighty Allāh bless this servant with goodness and quickly fulfil his desire to pledge allegiance at the hands of Hāḍrat Thānwi Raḥimahullāh.

Your servant Ismail ibn Husein Patel
Pārcha Farosh Jhāpa Bazār
Ankleswer
Bharūch

Answer

- 1) As Salaamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullah
- 2) For laziness there is no remedy except plucking up courage. Yes, one should be moderate with regards to the amount of Nafl that he performs, whereby he shall be able to keep it up.

I require that you answer the following:

You made mention very briefly that you study the books of Hādrat Thānwi, but you did not mention which books. Clearly state whether you have studied the following: Qasd-u-Sabīl; all the parts of Behishti Zewer; Behishti Ghohar; Ādābul-Muāsharah; and Tā'lim-u-Din. If you have not as yet read any of these, then do so immediately and then inform.

As with regards to daily practices complete the following:

- One Juz of the Noble Qurān daily
- Munājāt-e-Maqbūl
- Recitation of the kalimah – لا اله الا الله – 600 times in the morning and if for some reason that day you could not read your portion of Qurān, then the kalimah should be read 1000 times. If you cannot read the books of Hādrat Thānwi yourself, then have someone read it to you and complete a few readings of Qasd-u-Sabīl.

In the next letter inform of what progress you have made with regards to these instructions.

Muhammad Isa

Letter Number 6

(To Haḍrat Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib
Rahimahullāh)

From: A lowly servant Ismail Husein Patel

In the service of my most honourable and respected
Janāb Moulānā Sāhib

As Salaamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullah wa Barakaatuhu
(1)

This letter is in reply to the questions posed by Hādrat Janāb. The answers are as follows:

- I have read Qasd-u-Sabīl, all the parts of Behishti Zewer, as well as Behishti Ghohar, Ādābul-Muāsharah, Tā'limu-Din, as well as other books of Hādrat, and I continue reading Hādrat's writings. (2)
- Hādrat Janāb had prescribed daily Azkaar (wazāif), upon which I have made myself punctual, i.e. one Juz of the Noble Qurān, together with Munājāt-e-Maqbūl and the first kalimah six hundred times. I had done this for almost six weeks, after which I developed a severe headache, which prevented me from completing my portion of the Noble Qurān. I then, in accordance to Hādrat's instructions, began the recitation of the kalimah one thousand times. By the Grace of Almighty Allāh my headache has now disappeared and I shall soon again begin my recitation of the Noble Qurān. (3)
- From the time I had created a relationship with Hādrat Moulānā Ashraf Ali Sāhib I was blessed with seeing Hādrat five times in my dreams, with a gap of a few days between each vision. In all the dreams Hādrat expressed his happiness with me. My desire to now meet Hādrat has increased greatly and at times the thought arises that I should just leave all my occupations and present

myself in Hādrat's service, but after a short while this thought loses its strength and I lose courage. As yet I have never seen Hādrat. My love for Hādrat has been created through Hādrat's writings and discourses. (4)

- Once or twice daily I become engrossed in the thoughts of the greatness of Almighty Allāh, during which all other thoughts are effaced from my mind. At times the thought of death overtakes me. This also causes all thoughts of anything besides Almighty Allāh to disappear from my heart. During these moments I understand how low I really am, and find none to be as low as me. These thoughts however do not remain all the time.¹³

I request dua from Hādrat for death on Imaan and that I be granted the happiness of my Allāh. (6)

Ismail Husein Patel (7)

Kaapodra

22 Safar al-Muzaffar 1346.

¹³ This was the condition of a mere disciple of Hādrat Thānwi *Rahimahullah*. From here one can gauge what an impact Hādrat Thānwi *Rahimahullah* had on the general masses and on the Ulemā.

Answer

- 1) Wa-Alaikumus Salaam
- 2) Also read Islāh-u-Rusūm, as well as whatever book of Hādrat you can get hold off. It would be advisable to subscribe to the monthly magazine 'Al-Tabligh' which is published by Moulānā Shabir Ali Sāhib from Thanābowen.
- 3) It should never be forgotten that it is imperative that one recites the Noble Qurān with correct tajwid.
- 4) In-sha Allāh it is this love that you have that shall one day make you reach your goal.
- 5) This is a wonderful condition that you enjoy.
- 6) Āmin. Muhammad Isa
- 7) Why have you signed your name in English? Do you not know any Urdu? Reply in the next letter!

Letter Number 7

(To Hādrat Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib
Rahimahullāh)

Hādrat Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib (May your wonderful shadow long remain above us)

As-Salaamu Alaikum

I have read Islāh-u-Rusūm and have made my practice accordingly. I have also read many of the editions of Al-Tablīgh which I could find here. In-sha Allāh I shall soon subscribe personally for the magazine. By the Grace of Allāh I have learnt how to recite the Noble Qurān in accordance to the laws of Tajwīd. My condition at present is that which I had mentioned in the previous letter.

In-sha Allāh in the future I shall not sign in English, but in Urdu. Hādrat Thānwi had promised that he will accept my allegiance once I had began a relationship of education with you. I have also attached the two letters I had written to Hādrat Thānwi and Hādrat's answer. Will you please write for me a letter indicating that I have begun this relationship.

Hādrat can also instruct me with further teachings, since Hādrat Thānwi has ordered that I learn from you.

Patel Ismail Husein

Kāpodra

9th Jumād-al-Uula 1347

Answer

- 1) As Salaamu Alaikum
If there are any rights of fellow man (Huqūq-ul-Ibād) upon you, immediately fulfil those rights. For example, rights of inheritance owed to a sister, someone whose honour has been taken through backbiting or swearing, etc.
- 2) If you have missed any Salaah, fast, zakaat, etc. (Huqūq-ullāh), start immediately fulfilling these outstanding obligations.
- 3) Then perform two rakaats of Nafl, after which you should cry and beg Almighty Allāh to forgive all your sins and errors, those done in privacy and those done in the open.
- 4) Study again and again the discourses of Hādrat Thānwi (May Almighty Allāh keep him well).
- 5) Study Qasd-u-Sabūl again and ponder deeply over its content. Thereafter write to me the answers to the following:
 - a) What is the purpose for pledging allegiance (*Bai'ah*)
 - b) What is the work of the disciple (*murīd*) and what is the work of the mentor (*Pīr*)
 - c) What does Tasawwuf mean.
 - d) What is the status of Urs, Fātiha, Ghiyārwi¹⁴

¹⁴ Urs : Celebrating the death anniversary of a saint.
Fatiha : A custom during which food and sweetmeats, etc are placed on a cloth. Someone then stands in front of it and

and Bārwi, and does it have any sort of relationship with Tasawwuf

- 6) Also study Ādāb-ul-Muāsharah a couple of times and practice accordingly. Ensure that none are harmed by your hand nor by your tongue
- 7) Daily read a few lessons of the Masāil of Behishti Zewar
- 8) Ensure that five times Salaah is performed with congregation
- 9) Continuously inform regarding your spiritual condition. In your next letter explain how far you have come in fulfilling what has been asked above.
- 10) Also attach this paper with your next letter.
.....Muhammad Isa

recites a few Surahs of the Noble Qurān. He then takes the names of pious saints who have passed on and passes the rewards of the feeding as well as the reciting to their souls. (Translator)

Ghiyārwi : A gathering specifically for the passing of reward over to the soul of Sheikh Abdul Qādir Jailani Sāhib, celebrated by some on the 11th of every Islamic month. (Translator)

Bārwi : A celebration on the 12th of Rabi ul Awwal in honour of the birth-date of Rasulullāh Sallallahu Alaihi wa Sallam. (Translator)

Letter Number 8

(To Haḍrat Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib
Rahimahullāh)

In the service of my education mentor, Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib (May your shadow remain over us for a long time)

As Salaamu Alaikum

- a) In accordance to what I can remember there is no right of fellow man upon me. There is no inheritance owing to a sister, and I make great effort not to backbite or swear, and I pledge to continue with this effort.
- b) In accordance to what I know, I am fulfilling the Fardh obligations like Salāh, fasting and Zakāt. As for missed Salaah, I perform one missed Salāh after every Fardh Salāh. There are no missed fasts that I need to fulfil.
- c) According to instruction, I performed two Rakāts of Nafl and cried for forgiveness from all my sins.
(1)
- d) I have paid the yearly subscription fee for the monthly magazine, 'Al-Tabligh'. I also make an effort to receive other discourses of Hāḍrat and I practice accordingly.

- e) The purpose of allegiance is the pleasure of Almighty Allāh.

The prime work of the mentor is to instruct the disciple to fulfil all the commandments of the Shariah, and to be constant with his prescribed Azkār.

Sulūk, which is commonly known as Tasawwuf, is the beautifying of one's external condition with acts that are obligatory and beautifying one's internal condition with correct belief and good character. (2)

Urs, Fātiha, Ghiyārwi and Bārwi have no relationship with Tasawwuf whatsoever. Rather these are all innovations.

- f) I have studied Ādāb-ul-Muāsharah and have made my practice accordingly. In-sha Allāh I shall cause no harm to anyone with my hand nor with my tongue.
- g) I have gone through the lessons of Behishti Zewar and practice accordingly
- h) I observe my five times Salāh with congregation
- i) I shall, In-sha Allāh, keep informing regarding my spiritual state. According to Janāb's instructions I have moulded my practice. For the last five years I have left all those customs and innovations that have crept into marriages, mourning, etc.

Your servant Ismail Husein Kāpodra
11th Jumadal Ukhra

Answer

- 1) Once is enough
- 2) These matters can also be learnt from a book.
What then is the speciality of a mentor?

The correct answer is that by pledging allegiance the attention (*tawajjuh*) of the mentor becomes stronger upon one, and the disciple feels more inclined and enthusiastic to carry out the mentor's instructions. This is the wisdom behind selecting a particular mentor.

Letter Number 9

(To Haḍrat Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib
Rahimahullāh)

From Patel Ismail Husein Kapodariya

In the service of my education mentor, Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib (May Almighty Allāh keep your shadow over us for long)

As Salaamu Alaikum

By the Grace of Almighty Allāh and then by your pious duas I am well, and with consistency practicing upon the instructions given by Hāḍrat Moulānā. (1)

I fulfil my prescribed azkaar after the Fajr Salaah, but when I am unable to complete it at that time I do it at some other time. (2)

I perform eight rakāts of tahajjud after the Sunnah of Esha, before my witr. It is only in the month of Ramadhan that I perform my tahajjud in the last portion of the night.

I continuously study the discourses of Hāḍrat Moulānā Ashraf Ali Sāhib.

My spiritual condition: During the month of Ramadhan there were times when certain shaitāni doubts entered my mind, which made me fear that through these thoughts I would soon fall into kufr (disbelief). I then saw in the discourse of Hāḍrat Thānwi Raḥimahullāh, that when such a thing happens one has been taught in the Ahadith to recite – آمَنْتُ بِاللّٰهِ وَرُسُلِهِ

By the grace of Almighty Allāh, once I began reciting this phrase all the doubts and thoughts disappeared, and a unique feeling of sincerity developed within the heart.(3)

There are times when I perform my Salāh with great concentration and sincerity, after which a happy feeling overcomes me. Upon realizing, I rebuke myself that how dare you ever think that you have performed your acts of worship in a wonderful manner!

I have made an intention to travel to Burma in the next month or two. In-sha Allāh I shall inform you before setting off. (4)

As for the purpose of a mentor, as taught by Hādrat Moulānā in the previous letter, it is that by pledging allegiance the attention (*tawajjuh*) of the mentor becomes stronger upon one, and the disciple feels more inclined and enthusiastic to carry out the mentor's instructions. This is the wisdom behind selecting a particular mentor.

Answer

- 1) All praise be to Almighty Allāh. May Almighty Allāh keep you steadfast.
- 2) Complete your Azkaar whenever you find the time. However as far as possible let it all be completed in one sitting.
- 3) You have done well!
- 4) Definitely

Muhammad Isa
2nd Shawwal 1927

Letter Number 10

(Written by Moulānā Muhammad Isa Saheb
Rahimahullāh)

Honourable brother Patel Ismail Husein

As Salaamu Alaikum

I have received the letter of Hāḍrat Thānwi Sāhib, and have done as instructed. When Hāḍrat Thānwi Sāhib replies please do inform me. If I am asked to continue instructing you, then I am prepared for that. I have great hope that your allegiance shall be accepted through this letter. If Hāḍrat poses any other question then inform me immediately.

Requesting your duas
8th Jumādal-Ukhrā

Letter Number 11

(To Haḍrat Thānwi *Rahimahullāh*)

To my master and mentor (May your blessings spread far and wide)

I have attached the letters of instruction that was given to me by Moulānā Isa Sāhib, as well as Hāḍrat's initial letter in which I was told to acquire my basic education of this field from Moulānā Isa Sāhib. (1)

I request that this servant now be allowed the honour to enter into Hāḍrat's circle of disciples, since Hāḍrat had promised that upon my receiving instructions regarding this field from Moulānā Isa Sāhib my allegiance would be accepted.

May Almighty Allāh reward Hāḍrat in abundance for this.

Sent by: Ismail, the son of Husein
Kāpodra
Ankleswer
Gujrat
7th Jumādal Uula 1347

Answer

- 1) I had mentioned in my initial letter that after your education begins I will consider accepting your allegiance. As yet it has not begun. All Moulānā Isa Sāhib has done thus far is that he has asked you some questions. When you will start replying to his questions, then only shall your education begin. After that happens request from me to accept your allegiance.

Letter Number 12

(To Haḍrat Thānwi *Rahimahullāh*)

To my master and mentor. May Almighty Allāh lengthen your shadow over us.

In accordance to Hāḍrat's command I have now attached a letter of Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib stating that I have began my education under him. I have also attached Hāḍrat's initial letter in which the instruction was given that I establish a relationship with Moulānā Isa Sāhib.

I now request that this servant be allowed to enter amongst your disciples. May Almighty Allāh reward you abundantly and may Almighty Allāh allow us to benefit from Hāḍrat for a long time. Amīn.

Your servant
Ismail Husein Kāpodra
Ankleswer

Answer

As Salaamu Alaikum

After seeing the signature of Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib I have accepted your allegiance. May Almighty Allāh bless you.

Letter Number 13

(To Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib *Rahimahullāh*)

In the service of Hāḍrat Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib
(May Almighty Allāh keep your shadow above us)

As Salāmu Alaikum

The present spiritual condition of this lowly one is similar to the condition I had described in the previous letter.

I am setting off for a journey. Please make dua that Almighty Allāh makes it fruitful. If there is some advice that Hāḍrat can offer for the journey please do write it, so that I may take benefit from it during the journey.

Patel Ismail Husein
Kāpodra
Ankleswer
28th Zhul Hijjah 1347

Answer

During the journey do not allow any Salāh to be missed. Do not become angry. In all matters let the laws of the Shariah be your guiding light. When you are unaware of any law, ask those who know and follow accordingly.

Never trust your personal opinion nor show an attitude of no-concern.¹⁵

Muhammad Isa

Letter Number 14

(To Haḍrat Thānwi *Rahimahullāh*)

In the service of Hāḍrat Hakim-ul-Ummat As Salaamu Alaikum

I have a desire to make a sacrifice (qurbāni) on behalf of Hāḍrat, thus I seek Hāḍrat's permission to do so. The animal shall only be slaughtered if Hāḍrat permits. I have pledged allegiance to Hāḍrat and thus wish to slaughter an animal on Hāḍrat's behalf. Please accept this small gift.

Your servant
Ismail Husein Patel
Jitāli
5th Zhul Hijjah 1351

Answer

As Salaamu Alaikum

Permission granted on condition that there is no loan being taken¹⁶. May Almighty Allāh accept.

¹⁵ Subhānallāh! In so few words so much of advice has been given, on which books can be written in its explanation.

¹⁶ This is an example of the exemplary personality of Haḍrat Thānwi *Rahimahullāh*, that in his every advice and decision he

Letter Number 15

(To Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib *Rahimahullāh*)

From Ismail Husein Patel

In the service of Janāb Moulānā, most honourable and most esteemed (May your shadow remain for long over us)

As Salaamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullāh (1)

I received Hādrat's reply to my letter on the 15th of Zhul-Qa'dah. I have begun reciting the Noble Qurān, and have made great effort to control my anger.

I have the books Tablīgh-e-Dīn and Anfās-e-Isa and I am at the moment studying both of them. As for the book Kamālāt-e-Ashrafiyah I have sent in an order for it.

Five days ago I began the twelve tasbīhs that have been prescribed. Please make dua for steadfastness.

After every Salāh, by the grace of Almighty Allāh I complete one tasbeeh each of Istighfār, of Durūd Sharīf, of SubhānAllāh, of Alhamdulillah, and Lā ilāha illallāh.

After Maghrib Salāh I perform four extra rakāts of Nafl.

Hādrat, I find within myself many spiritual ailments. I find that I am still in need of a complete cure for vanity and other ailments. It has come in the heart that

remained observant of the laws of the Shariah. Subhanallāh! Indeed the world has produced few of such caliber.

merely through books the eradication of these ailments shall be difficult, thus I find myself desirous of presently myself in your service. Please make dua that Almighty Allāh allow me to fulfil my quest.

My daughter, Hawwā-Bi has just completed her recitation of the Noble Qurān and has now begun Behishti Zewer. Please make dua for her.

My second daughter, Fatima, is still learning Qurān and my youngest, Abdullāh, is now just turning two. Please remember all of them in your dua. My wife, Amina, has conveyed her Salaams. (3)

I seek pardon for whatever error I may have committed.

As Salāmu Alaikum
21/03/1935

Answer

- 1) As Salaamu Alaikum
- 2) The method for rectification of spiritual ailments is that first you should read the prescribed books and then look within yourself to identify your maladies. Upon identification seek treatment from your mentor and practice in accordance to what he prescribes. In this manner, over a period of time, one's condition shall improve. Take one ailment at a time.
- 3) و عليهم و عليكم السلام

Letter Number 16

(To Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib *Rahimahullāh*)

In the service of my honourable Hāḍrat
From the lowly servant Ismail Husein Patel

As Salaamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullāh wa Barakatuhū (1)

I am well, by the grace of Almighty Allāh, and I pray that you and your family are also well. I request you to remember me in your duas. I seek pardon for the lengthy delay in sending a letter. (2)

I promise, In-sha Allāh, to be more regular with sending letters, at least once a month, requesting duas. I am at present constant with my five times Salāh and my fasts.

Suleiman Husein Mansoor has conveyed his Salaams.

Ismail Husein Patel
22nd January 1935

Answer

- 1) As Salaamu Alaikum
- 2) After such a long delay I cannot even remember your name. Thus send to me all the correspondence that has until now occurred between us, so that I may recall who you are.
- 3) Have you not as yet read Qasd-u-Sabīl and Tablīgh-e-Dīn. If you have read it, then can you not identify any malady within you that requires rectification?
- 4) و علیہم و علیکم السلام

Muhammad Isa

Letter Number 17

(To Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib *Rahimahullāh*)

In the service of Hāḍrat Moulānā Shah Muhammad Isa Sāhib (May his blessings spread far and wide)

As Salaamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullah wa Barakatuhu (1)

I have received your reply to my letter, which has made me extremely happy. According to Hāḍrat's request I have sent two of my previous letters which I have with me. Unfortunately the rest are at my hometown.

I have read Qasd-u-Sabīl and I regularly study the magazines, Al-Muballigh, Al-Nūr, Al-Hādi, and Al-Ibqā.

Mā-shā Allāh, I find from the duas of you and Hāḍrat Thānwi great spiritual benefit. The wisdoms behind the laws of Almighty Allāh are becoming more and more apparent.

If an act contrary to the Shariah occurs in front of me, I become filled with emotion and anger, and at times immediately rebuke the offender. A holier than thou attitude at times takes hold of me, due to which I find myself later regretting the harsh manner in which I had addressed the offender. Please offer some solution. (2)

I find no inclination to the ways of the disbelievers. (3)

I have lost interest in worldly occupations. It is my desire to pass my time in the remembrance of Almighty

Allāh or in studying the writings of my honourable mentor, Hādrat Moulānā Ashraf Ali Sāhib Thānwi. I have begun studying Bayānul-Qurān and have completed the 16th Juz.

I recite daily Munājāt-e-Maqbūl and the first kalimah, but I find myself weak when it comes to Tilāwah of the Noble Qurān, which many a time is left out completely. (4)

Without any doubt this lowly one has benefitted greatly from you and from Hādrat Thānwi. The weakness which is left is all due to my own self. May Almighty Allāh have mercy upon me, and bless me with a good death. Please make dua for me.

Sufi Suleiman Sāhib and Zeenatullah have sent their Salaams. (5)¹⁷

The lowly one, Ismail Husein
Heeyu
2nd Zhul Qa'dah 1353 A.H

Answer

- 1) As Salaamu Alaikum
- 2) If, whilst reprimanding another, you exceed the limit and physically or verbally abuse the offender, then seek pardon immediately. If the offender is a worker then besides asking for

¹⁷ These were two individuals from Burma who had established a relationship with Hādrat Thānwi *Rahimahullāh*. Unfortunately we have not been able to locate or identify them.

forgiveness, also ensure that you soften his heart towards you with some gift.

- 3) This is a good condition.
- 4) Take out some time for the recitation of the Noble Qurān, even if it be only fifteen minutes daily.
- 5) عليهم و عليكم السلام

Letter Number 18

(To Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib *Rahimahullāh*)

In the service of my honourable mentor, Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib (May his shadow remain over us for a long time)

As Salaamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullāh

This letter is to inform Hāḍrat that I have closed my business in Heeyu, Burma and have returned to my hometown. I have now intended to proceed to Thanābowen, where I desire to spend the month of Ramadhān, and benefit directly from Hāḍrat.

I shall reach Thanbowen on the 20th of Sha'baan. I request advice on what to do while in the company of Hāḍrat Thānwi Sāhib, whereby my stay can be fruitful.

I also request duas for steadfastness on my religion and for death with Īmān.

A lowly servant
Ismail Husein Patel
Kāpodravi, Ankleswer

Baruch
4th Sha'bān 1354

Answer

As Salaamu Alaikum

- 1) Why did you first not consult with me with regards to going to Thanābowen?
- 2) Is just going with consultation also not part of acting upon one's personal opinion.
- 3) Is holding a personal opinion not extremely harmful in this path?
- 4) Without your previous letters how am I supposed to remember your spiritual condition? How then do you expect me to offer you advice?

May Almighty Allāh grant us all proper understanding.

Letter Number 19

(To Hāḍrat Thānwi Sāhib *Rahimahullāh*)

From the lowly servant, Ismail Husein Patel
In the service of my master and mentor, Hāḍrat
Moulānā Ashraf Ali Sāhib (May his shadow be upon us
for a long time)

As Salaamu Alaikum (1)

I had pledged allegiance to Hāḍrat about seven years ago, and Hāḍrat had ordered that I take instructions

from Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib. I have just returned from Burma and request permission to spend my Ramadhān in Hāḍrat's company in Thanābowen.

I intend arriving on the 20th of Sha'bān. I shall make my own arrangements for food. It is just permission to come that I seek. (2)

Please make dua for me that Almighty Allāh cleanse me from evil traits and adorn me with good qualities.

Kāpodra, Ankleswer
4th Sha'bān 1354

Answer

- 1) As Salaamu Alaikum
- 2) The crowds in Ramadhān increase, thus if you are willing not to engage me in conversation you may come. Upon arrival show me this letter.

Letter Number 20

(To Hādrat Thānwi Sāhib *Rahimahullāh*)

From a lowly servant, Ismail Husein Patel
In the service of my master and mentor, Moulānā
Ashraf Ali Sāhib

As Salaamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullah wa Barakatuhu (1)

I had spent time in Hādrat's company from the 27th of Sha'bān until the 21st of Ramadhān, and have now returned home safely, with the grace and kindness of Almighty Allāh. (2)

Please make dua that Almighty Allāh bless me with His Pleasure and with death upon Īmān. (3)

My son, Abdullāh, has conveyed Salaams, and has requested for dua.

Kāpodra
Baruch
9th Shawaal 1354

Answer

- 1) As Salaamu Alaikum
- 2) Alhamdu Lillāh
- 3) I have made dua for you from my heart
- 4) Give him my Salaams and tell him that I have made dua for him as well¹⁸

¹⁸ After the grace of Almighty Allāh, it was perhaps due to this dua of Hādrat Thānwi *Rahimahullāh* that so much of work has

Letter Number 21

(To Hāḍrat Thānwi Sāhib *Rahimahullāh*)

In the service of my mentor and master, Hāḍrat Moulānā Ashraf Ali Sāhib Thānwi (May his shadow remain over us for a long time)

As Salaamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullah wa Barakatuhu (1)

After pledging allegiance to Hāḍrat, I was told to take instruction from Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib *Dāmat Barakātuhu*, which I am until present doing.

I have written enquiring regarding the health of Hāḍrat. (2)

For the last fifteen days my health has not been good. The doctors have diagnosed pneumonia, and have prescribed medication, with which I am continuing. With Hāḍrat's duas there is much improvement. I request further dua that Almighty Allāh bless me with total recovery, and bless us all with ease in both the worlds. Aamīn (3)

A lowly servant, Ismail Husein Patel

Kāpodra

Ankleswer

Baruch

20/04/1940

been taken from Hāḍrat Moulānā Abdullāh Sāhib Kāpodravi. (May Almighty Allāh keep his shadow over us for a long time)

Answer

- 1) As Salaamu Alaikum
- 2) I am well
- 3) I am making dua for you

Letter Number 22

(To Hādrat Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib
Rahimahullāh)

In the service of Hādrat Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib
Dāmat Barakātuhum

As Salaamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullah wa Barakatuhu (1)

I seek pardon that I had not written for a long time to Hādrat. I am extremely sorry and filled with regret.

Until today however I am steadfast upon the prescribed practices. Of recent my health has not been too good, and doctors have diagnosed pneumonia. I had written to Hādrat-e-Aqdas Thānwi requesting for dua, and I also ask for your duas.

Please make dua for my complete recovery¹⁹ and that Almighty Allāh keep me and my family in a good condition in both the worlds. (2)

¹⁹ Perhaps this was the first time that the writer of the letters requested dua for some worldly matter. Whereas today, the condition of the majority who pledge allegiance is that they primarily seek worldly blessings through their pledge of allegiance.

A lowly servant, Ismail Husein Patel
Kāpodra
Baruch
20/04/1940

Answer

- 1) As Salaamu Alaikum
- 2) May Almighty Allāh turn upon you His Special Attention and bless you with total recovery. Aamīn

Letter Number 23

(To Hāḍrat Thānwi Sāhib *Rahimahullāh*)

In the service of Hāḍrat Moulānā Hakimul-Ummat, Mujaddid-ul-Millat Ashraf Ali Sāhib (May his shadow remain above our heads for a long time)

As Salaamu Alaikum (1)

I had previously written to Hāḍrat regarding the pneumonia that I was suffering from. Please make dua that Almighty Allāh grant me complete cure. Through the grace of Almighty Allāh and your sincere duas there is already much improvement. It is just the weakness that is still remaining. Please make dua for my total recovery and that I be blessed with death upon Īmān, and that I attain the Pleasure of Almighty Allāh. Aamīn!

A lowly servant
Ismail Husein Patel

Kāpodra
Ankleswer
Baruch

Answer

- 1) As Salaamu Alaikum
- 2) I am making dua

Letter Number 24

(To Hāḍrat Moulānā Muhammad Isa Sāhib
Rahimahullāh)

In the service of Hāḍrat Moulānā, most esteemed and honoured, Janāb Haji Muhammad Isa Sāhib (May his shadow remain upon us for a long time and may his blessings spread far and wide)

As Salaamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullāh wa Barakātuhu (1)

By the grace of Almighty Allāh I am well, and I am eager to know of the well-being of Hāḍrat. (2)

In accordance to Hāḍrat's instructions, In-shā Allāh, in my every action I shall first ponder over what the Shariah commands. My first priority shall be my Salāh. My clothing and my eating shall be in accordance to the Sunnah.

Together with Hāḍrat's response to my letter someone else's letter was mistakenly also placed in the same envelope. I have sent it back to Hāḍrat.

Please make dua for my family and I, that Almighty Allāh blesses us with steadfastness on Islam, with correct understanding, and with continuous progress in this path.

I am constant with my prescribed practices.

In need of your duas

Your servant

Ismail Husein Patel

Ankleswer

Bānsot Rd, Muslim Boarding House

Baruch

20/06/1941

Answer

- 1) As Salaamu Alaikum
- 2) Alhamdulillah, I am well
- 3) It was sent by mistake
- 4) I am making sincere dua for you
- 5) May Almighty Allāh bless with steadfastness

Letter Number 25

(This letter was sent on behalf of Hādrat Thānwi Rahimahullāh to all those who had some sort of relationship with him. It was written by Moulānā Shabbier Ali Sāhib²⁰)

²⁰ Hādrat Moulānā Shabbier Ali Sāhib Thānwi was the nephew of Hādrat Thānwi *Rahimahullāh*. He graduated at both Mazāhir-ul-Ulum, and Dārul Ulūm Deoband. He was the principal of Madrasah Ashrafiyah at Thanābowen. He also for some time served as the head of Mazāhir-ul-Ulūm, was on the board of members of Dārul-Ulūm Deoband, and was the chairperson of Majlis Da'watul-Haq Thanābowen.

He was born in the year 1313 A.H. Being the paternal nephew of Hādrat Thānwi *Rahimahullāh*, his nurturing and initial education occurred under the supervision of Hādrat himself, which he then completed at Mazāhir-ul-Ulūm, Saharanpūr. After completion he enrolled at Dārul Ulūm Deoband, where he repeated his final year.

Amongst his teachers were Hādrat Sheikhul-Hind, Hādrat Moulānā Khalil Ahmed Sāhib Saharanpūri, and Hādrat Moulānā Abdullāh Sāhib Gangohi.

After studies he began teaching at Madrasah Imdādiyah Ashrafiya Thanābowen, and Hādrat Thānwi Rahimahullah later appointed him as its principal.

Most respected

As Salaamu Alaikum

The old station of Thanābowen was situated at a distance of close to two miles away from the residence area. The train would pass so close to the area and then make its stop two miles away. Travellers to Thanābowen would then have to undertake a second journey on foot, etc to reach the area. This would cause great inconvenience, especially at night and during the rainy season. Hāḍrat Hakim-ul-Ummat (May Almighty Allāh keep his shadow for a long time over us) was deeply desirous that the station be moved closer to the area to make the journey easy for those coming to visit him.

Moulānā Shabbier Sāhib established a printing press especially for the purpose of printing and distributing Hāḍrat Thānwi *Rahimahullāh's* writings and discourses, which he named 'Imdād-ul-Matābi'. It was from here that the magazines, Al-Tabligh, Al-Hādi, Al-Imdād, Al-Muballigh, etc. would be published.

Moulānā Shabbier Sāhib also completed Hāḍrat Thānwi's commentary on the Mathnawi, which has been published under the title of 'Sharh-e-Shabbiri'. In the spreading of Hāḍrat Thānwi's teachings Moulānā Shabbier Sāhib played a great role. After the formation of Pākistan, Moulānā Shabbier Sāhib settled in Karāchi. He passed away on the 28th of Rajab 1388 A.H. and was buried in Karāchi. (Kārwan-Thānwi pg-251)

Alhamdulillah, this desire of Hādrat's has finally taken shape. Some members of the area have persuaded the station manager to move the station close to the area. As a trial, a temporary station has thus been erected on the 18th of November 1928, next to the Eid-Ghāh, which is at a mere five minutes walk from Hādrat's khānqah. The manager has promised that if they find the public happy with this arrangement they will very soon convert it into a permanent station.

It is thus imperative that all those who have some affinity with Hādrat Hakim-ul-Ummat express their happiness to the station master, both by word and by action.

When purchasing one's ticket, do not merely ask for a ticket to Thanābowen, but instead clearly state that you wish to purchase a ticket for Thanābowen Town, which is the name of this new station.

Together with this, write a letter to the station manager expressing your delight over this move. Request those whose words hold weight to also send such letters. If the letters could be in English it would be even better.

Explain in the letter that you have been delighted to hear the good news of a station opening up quite close to the area, since you and many of your friends come to Thanābowen regularly, but find it extremely difficult, due to the train stopping so far from the area. Also write that you have hope that very soon this temporary station shall be converted into a permanent structure, since this will be a cause of great ease and convenience for the public.

Note: Since this message has been sent out to many, if one is unable to express this message in English, he should at minimum ensure that he does not write out this very letter in Urdu, word for word. Rather, he should express this message in his own words so that it does not appear as though it is the same letter on different people's names. Please do not delay in carrying out this request.

Finally address the letter to:

Dibloji Al Gilbret Sāhib
Manager of S S Light-railway – Delhi

Do not merely address it to 'Manager S S R', otherwise those in the office shall open it, and it may not then reach the manager.

Together with your name, add your title as well, so that it may be apparent that the letters are coming from the educated and high-class community as well. In this matter, do not show a humble attitude.

Request made by: Muhammad Shabbier Ali
Director of Ashraf-ul-Matābi'
Thanābowen, Muzaffarnigar

Signed by: Ashraf Ali
27 Rajab 1347 A.H